FEBRUARY 2015 / ISSUE 11

demo

the hart house music magazine

HOW THE INTERNET KIND OF WRECKED MUSIC

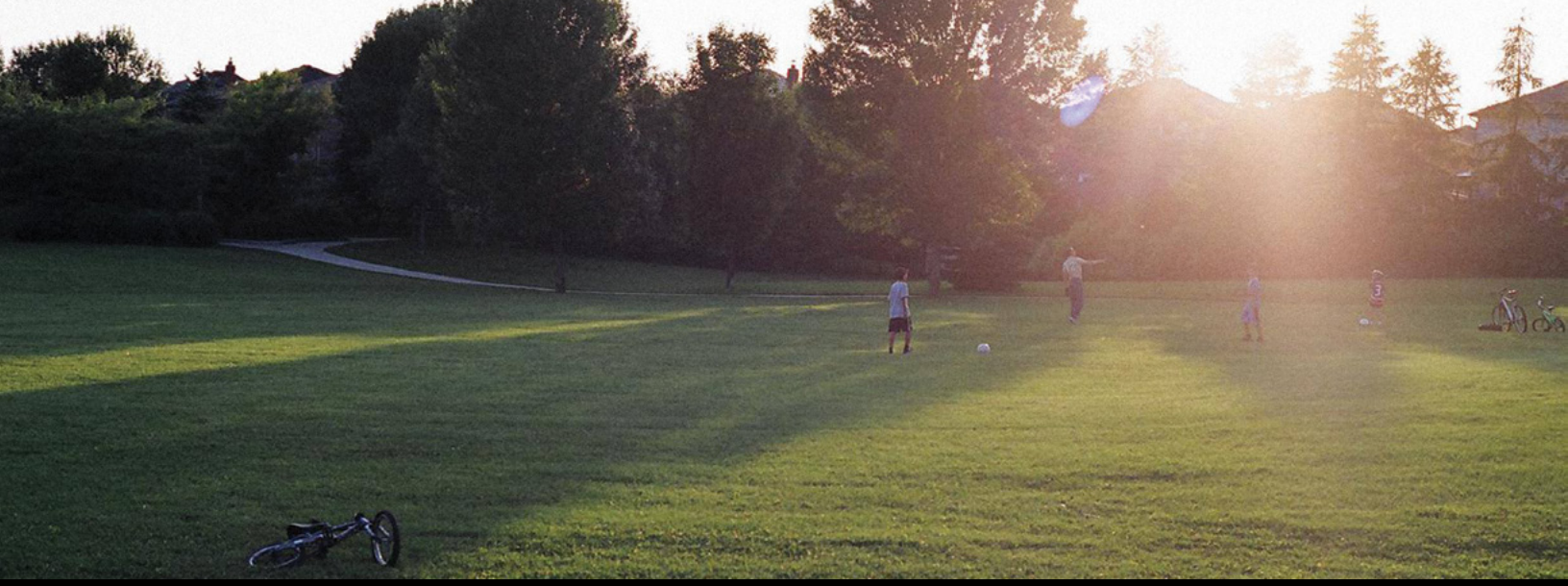
SOYBOMB
THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF TORONTO'S INFAMOUS PUNK VENUE

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION
IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

KILL YOUR IDOLS
WHY WE WANT OUR ARTISTS TO SUFFER

LIDO PIMIENTA

"THE JOB THAT I GIVE MYSELF IS TO SHARE TRUTHS"



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Demo: The Hart House Music Magazine
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR EMILY SCHERZINGER

Demo has helped me realize one thing this year: music connects everyone. Demo meetings are administrative and brainstorming sessions that double as hang-outs; after the meeting has been adjourned, contributors instantaneously dissolve into questions and sharing. "Have you heard of this band?" and "What do you think about this genre?" are some of the most common things to overhear. Admittedly, I have discovered some wonderful music through suggestions, but also just by eavesdropping on conversations around the room as everyone is milling about after a meeting. But some conversations go even deeper: as I was packing up my notes, I once heard a contributor mention to another, "This song helped me through a similar rough period in my life."

Just like I have heard from my wonderful contributors, Demo has been a beacon to guide me through everything — in times of crisis, whether personal, academic, or somewhere in between, I turn to the friends I made through this magazine. I met some of my closest friends — the friends I could not go a day without talking to — through Demo. Whenever I leave a Demo meeting, my day is instantly better, and I walk home and listen to new music with a smile. I have never felt more at home at U of T.

In our pages, you will find everything needed to make readers feel at home in the Toronto music scene: our contributors have chronicled some wonderful ways to discover music in the city (pages 6 and 11 look at Toronto music blogging and the hidden history of a legendary punk venue, respectively), some amazing thinkpieces (pages 12 and 13 question why society is obsessed with the figure of the suffering artist), and contemporary hot buttons in musical dialogue (pages 14 and 15 critique cultural appropriation in the music world).

My thanks will always go out to all of our wonderful Demo-ers — without your contributions, both in print and online, we would never be what we are. I enjoy every moment I get to spend with you, especially when I get to give you advice on some of the weirdest life situations you may ever find yourself in.

Thanks also has to be extended to our staff advisor, Zoe Dille, for always guiding Demo, keeping us up to date on amazing Hart House events, and always having a smile on her face.

I also owe my thanks to James Li for being the best managing online editor that U of T (and, quite possibly, Toronto) has to offer. In times of deep academic depression, James has managed to pull some amazing articles, lists, and other content out of our contributors — all while somehow always keeping on top of music news.

Finally, I have to thank my wonderful co-editor, Marko Cindric. He may doubt himself, but he is a powerhouse, and he always knows when to take off his editor hat and put on his friend hat for me over coffee. I may be leaving Demo this year, but this magazine is in his capable hands, and I have no doubt that he will be able to manage it with the passion and commitment that I always did.

Thank you, Demo, for everything you have given me. I have watched you grow, and you have watched me grow, over these past four years. It's been real, it's been weird, it's been everything in between, and I don't regret a thing.

— Emily Scherzinger

Emily Scherzinger is a fourth-year student studying English and Women & Gender Studies. She enjoys wearing shirts with Peter Pan collars, preferably in black. On an average day, Emily trips at least five times, eats pizza at least twice, and listens to an oscillating mixture of rap and blues at least eighty times. Conversations with Emily regularly involve witchcraft, effectively allowing her to enter your psyche and break you down as a human being. Emily can usually be found in a library, or wandering around Toronto with her trusty pet chameleon, Francis, on her head.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR MARKO CINDRIC

Attending the University of Toronto is a sobering experience — the St. George campus alone has an undergraduate population larger than my entire hometown, and placed within the context of Toronto at large, it doesn't take much to become overwhelmed by it all. For me, discovering Demo was the cure. I'm not sure many publications could boast quite the same sense of community that I found here; editors and contributors alike quickly became some of my closest friends in the city, and, together, we have assembled a tight-knit network of love, support, encouragement, and mentorship, all brought together by a simple, shared passion for music.

To say that knowing these people is one of the greatest gifts in life would be an understatement. Since joining the magazine, I've found myself listening to entirely new genres of music, facing entirely new challenges, and developing entirely new perspectives on life, and Demo-ers past and present have been by my side every step of the way. Through the good and the bad, Demo has kept me grounded — a home away from home that I can always return to. This year, as junior editor-in-chief, I'm pleased to be able to return the favour.

I hope that you'll enjoy reading this issue of Demo as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you. Our contributors have a remarkable knack for taking academically-minded, analytical approaches when it comes to writing about topics of interest in music, and the results never fail to engage or enrich. As such, I'd like to thank all of our contributors for their hard work — writers, photographers, illustrators, and layout designers alike. In print and online, none of this would exist without you.

I'd like to thank our Hart House staff advisor, Zoe Dille, for her warm guidance and her consistent support in breathing this publication to life.

I'd also like to thank our managing online editor, James Li, for being a walking encyclopedia of music knowledge, for investing countless hours of hard work in making our website the best it has ever been, and for being so willing to share his extensive music taste. Nobody has inspired me to remain so musically receptive quite like he has.

Finally, I'd like to extend my thanks to my partner in crime, Emily Scherzinger, for her unyielding encouragement, her realism, her dynamism, her wisdom beyond her years, and above all else, her friendship. Emily is Demo — she is the embodiment of everything that makes this publication great. Following in her footsteps next year will be no easy task, and I'm incredibly grateful to be able to share this issue with her as my co-editor.

Demo is so much more than a music magazine. We hope you enjoy the ride.

— Marko Cindric

Marko Cindric is a third-year Art History major, as well as an aspiring musician and music producer. While he somehow finds the time to teach himself 3D graphic design, synthesizer programming, and video editing, his cooking skills remain on the back burner. His music tastes are vast, including gritty and weird rap music to creepy electronic music that you would not want to be listening to in the dark. You'll probably run into him working box office at a Wavelength show sometime soon, and he will most likely be wearing his cork necklace.

SPECIAL THANKS

Lido Pimienta

Andrew Pulsifer

Elena Gritzan

Adam Bradley

Parents

Coffee

Red Room

Death Grips

Partial Course Loads

Teenage Angst

LETTER FROM THE HART HOUSE STAFF ADVISOR ZOE DILLE

All things good things start with an 'H.'

Take, for instance, the words "happy," "healthy," "home," and even "Halloween" — they all have Hart House connections! Not only do they share an 'H' with Hart House, but they share a kindred spirit with us too. Hart House is at the centre of campus life. It exists as a meeting place for dialogues of consequence, social enrichment, friendly laughter, physical activity, and artistic engagement. It is a place where you can celebrate the Hart House of Horrors during Halloween, indulge in some cardio at the gym, or just find a cozy spot to call your own in between classes, before work, or before the commute home.

Demo is a perfect example of the intangible spirit that is Hart House. A few years ago, a small idea by one inspired and creative student sparked a creative revolution. Now, several years later, Demo is changing lives, impacting careers, and immeasurably enriching the lives of all its contributors. Spearheaded by Editor-in-Chief Emily Scherzinger in her final year, and her co-editor, Marko Cindric, it is heartening to see just how much dedication and love there is for this little magazine. I could write a long list of all the things Hart House is, but it is truly said much better on the pages, through the photographs, and in the sparkle behind the eye of all the student writers, photographers, editors, and graphic designers that make Demo a reality. I have spoken of this before in some of my Hart House musings, but it really seems worth pointing out the obvious: to talk about Demo is to talk about Hart House and vice versa. We have taken the universal language of music and linked it to the campus and our city, making unique and insightful connections to the world of academics, campus life, and the role the university plays in shaping a vibrant, active and dynamic civic society.

When you get involved and follow or find your passion, there is no limit to where it might take you, how it might enrich your life, change your career trajectory, increase your cultural competency, connect you to your civic society, and — best of all — enlarge your circle of friends.

There is always a lot going on here at Hart House — perhaps it is something big and crazy, like the Halloween party, or more introspective, like the new Mindful Meditation workshops, for those seeking a more inward-facing journey. Through it all, we have got music for it all. Hart House kicked off the year with reggae and had people dancing in the Arbor Room (really dancing!), and we took audience members on a musical adventure with Irshad Khan's world music ensemble. We have also presented recitals, jazz concerts, and hosted an Open Mic and a U of T Idol for aspiring student performers — all this, and the year is not even over yet!

Keep your ears open, because Hart House is where the soundtrack of your life is playing.

Congratulations to the Demo team for keeping the spirit of Hart House alive!

— Zoe Dille

DON'T BE THAT GUY

A CRASH COURSE IN CONCERT ETIQUETTE

CAREY ROACH

CONCERTS CAN BE TRULY MAGICAL EVENTS THAT FOSTER A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY, LOVE, AND APPRECIATION AMONG THE CROWD. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE. CONCERT ETIQUETTE IS A TRICKY SUBJECT, BUT THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT ARE NEVER OKAY.

1. **DO NOT MOSH AT INAPPROPRIATE TIMES.**

   WHEN I SAW THE NATIONAL, A GROUP OF DRUNKEN TEENAGERS BEGAN MOSHING BESIDE ME, WHICH WAS IRRITATING AND DOWNRIGHT BIZARRE. SAVE THE MOSHING AND AGGRESSION FOR PUP SHOWS, AND TONE IT DOWN FOR MORE MELLOW SETS SO THAT I CAN FULLY FOCUS ON MATT BERNINGER'S BEAUTIFUL VOICE.

2. **DO NOT WATCH THE SHOW THROUGH THE LENS OF YOUR CAMERA, OR, EVEN WORSE, YOUR IPAD.**

   EVERYONE WANTS TO TAKE A QUICK PICTURE OF A REALLY COOL STAGE SETUP, OR RECORD THE CHORUS OF THEIR FAVOURITE SONG, BUT CONSTANT SNAPPING OR FILMING IS ANNOYING AND RUINS THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SHOW.

3. **DO NOT TALK THROUGH THE OPENING ACT.**

   THIS IS INCREDIBLY DISRESPECTFUL AND RUDE TO BOTH THOSE AROUND YOU AND THE ARTISTS; KEEP CONVERSATIONS TO A MINIMUM TO AVOID BEING A TOTAL JERK.

4. **BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS.**

   LARGE, TIGHTLY PACKED CROWDS AND DRINKING ARE NOT THE BEST COMBINATION. EVERYONE STUBS A TOE OR TWO, BUT IF YOU SPILL YOUR BEER ON AN INNOCENT CONCERTGOER, BE AWARE ENOUGH TO APOLOGIZE.

5. **KEEP THINGS PG.**

   THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT IS SKETCHY, BUT LIVE MUSIC SEEMS TO BE AN APHRODISIAC. SPEAKING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, BEING SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY GRINDING COUPLES IS UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNNECESSARY.

6. **PACK LIGHTLY.**

   THOSE GUYS AT OSHEAGA WEARING FISHING VESTS WERE ON TO SOMETHING. COMPACT AND NON-INTRUSIVE BAGS (OR EVEN JUST POCKETS), ARE IDEAL AND DO NOT GET IN THE WAY LIKE OVERSIZED BACKPACKS DO.

7. **DO NOT FORCE YOUR WAY TO THE FRONT.**

   JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN WEAVE THROUGH THE CROWD AND MAKE IT TO THE FRONT ROW DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU SHOULD.

8. **DO NOT DROWN OUT THE MUSIC.**

   EVERYONE GETS EXCITED AND CHEERS AT SHOWS, BUT EXCESSIVE SCREAMING, WHICH DISTRACTS FROM THE MUSIC, IS OBNOXIOUS.

9. **TRY NOT TO SMELL THAT BAD.**

   SWEAT IS UNAVOIDABLE AT CONCERTS, BUT THINGS LIKE DEODORANT AND CLIMATE-APPROPRIATE CLOTHING HELP, AND SHOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

Carey Roach is a first-year student and self-proclaimed "happy music" hater. She can often be found hiding in her bedroom, flipping through one of her Tori Amos picture books and sadly playing her melodica. She maintains a light-hearted spirit by frequently daydreaming about Whole Foods, successfully mastering the charango, and remembering that time she touched Matt Berninger's microphone cord and experienced a moment of pure existential bliss. Her Wi-Fi network is named "nationalgal1996." If you ever spot her without a cardigan on, please contact her parents immediately because something has gone terribly wrong.

POST-SHOW GRUB

WHERE TO GET FOOD AFTER A CONCERT

EMILY SCHERZINGER

VENUE: LEE'S PALACE
RESTAURANT: PIZZA GIGI

If you're looking for well known, good pizza, Pizza Gigi is the place to go. It's open until 4 AM on weekend nights, so you'll have time after the show to hang around the venue to stalk the performer and then maybe get pizza with them after? One can only hope.

VENUE: EL MOCAMBO
RESTAURANT: RED ROOM

Since the El Mocambo has apparently been saved from being gutted and will remain as a concert venue, Red Room is the place to hit for eats after the show. Enjoy its gothic design aesthetic, weird background music, and delicious food — everything is good!

VENUE: SNEAKY DEE'S
RESTAURANT: MARS FOOD

For the greasiest breakfast in the city, Mars Food is the restaurant to hit. And, lucky for you, you can get their breakfast 24 hours on Fridays and Saturdays. While it may also be one of the dirtiest restaurants in the city, the delicious food and bemused ambivalence from the staff makes this diner the best place to drunkenly grab some oddly early morning eats to soak up all that alcohol.

VENUE: ANYWHERE
RESTAURANT: ANY CONVENIENCE STORE

Some (unknowing) people may cringe at the thought, but almost any convenience store in the city sells Jamaican patties, and when you're hungry and stranded somewhere after a sweaty concert, any food seems good. Get it heated up, chomp down, and enjoy that spicy goodness before wandering home.

CANADIAN ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND HOW TO BLOG ABOUT IT

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW PULSIFER OF TORONTO'S SILENT SHOUT

QUEROBIN MENDOZA

Andrew Pulsifer is one of the main co-founders of SILENT SHOUT.CA, a Toronto-based electronic music blog. Named after the Knife's critically acclaimed album from 2006, Silent Shout features short, concise reviews of Canadian electronic music. The blog also includes an impressive social media directory with a seemingly endless list of artists. Further, Silent Shout hosts a concert series deemed "one of Toronto's best known music parties." Demo had the chance to catch up with Andrew and hear his take on Canadian electronic music, Silent Shout, and music blogging in general.

DEMO MAGAZINE: WALK ME THROUGH THE PROCESS THAT COMES WITH CREATING A BLOG. HOW DID THE IDEA FIRST COME TO YOU AND HOW DID YOU PROCEED WITH IT?

Andrew Pulsifer: Alt [Altman] and I decided independently of each other to start a monthly dance party in Toronto. We started the blog to… support that. We came in at the tail-end of [the] blog movement and idolized the model started by Herohill, Said The Gramophone, and 20 Jazz Funk Greats and wanted to have another avenue to promote local music and the live series.

DM: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE KNIFE'S 2006 ALBUM AS A NAMESAKE?

AP: Alt and I both love the Knife, and wanted a name that would speak to the mandate of the blog. It was a promotional strategy, more or less, to have people familiar with that style of music be interested in coming to the site.

DM: MANY OF THE WRITERS FOR SILENT SHOUT USE MONIKERS. WHAT'S THE REASON BEHIND IT?

AP: Well, Alt [who uses the handle "Digits" on the blog] and I started the trend, and a couple opted to follow suit. I personally do it to take a tiny bit of personal responsibility away from posting things. I love everything that I write about, but I think music blogs in general need to move away from the idea that a single person's taste is supreme. ARP 2600 is almost a character that I play who is extreme in his tunnel vision of only listening to one genre from a specific region. Obviously that's not the case — I listen to a lot of stuff.

DM: WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND YOUR MONIKER, ARP 2600?

AP: ARP 2600 is my DJ name. My initials are Andrew Robert Pulsifer and the ARP 2600 is one of the most famous early synthesizers available on the market. It seemed like a good fit.

DM: THE "ABOUT" SECTION OF YOUR BLOG STATES THAT YOU "POST INDIE ELECTRONIC MUSIC FROM CANADA THAT SKEWS TOWARDS THE DARK AND GLOOMY. PLEASE DON'T BOTHER SENDING US YOUR STUFF IF YOU'RE NOT FROM CANADA." WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO WRITE SOLELY ABOUT CANADIAN ARTISTS?

AP: Mainly, we just need to offer some limitation. We're not jingoists in any way, and value all music from anywhere in the world, but we have enough trouble covering everything that happens in this country that it would be… time-consuming to cover everything else. Also, at the time we started, Canadian electro-pop was very much overlooked, and we knew of some excellent bands in the country that were deserving of more coverage. Because we had access to these musicians with our own various projects, we made the choice to limit the geography. Without that kind of access, we would be writing about the same stuff that everyone else writes about.

DM: ASIDE FROM BEING A MUSIC BLOG, SILENT SHOUT ALSO HOSTS A CONCERT SERIES AND DJ NIGHTS. WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

AP: [L]ife moves on and most of us are pretty focused on other projects, [so] we're putting the… series on indefinite hiatus. The blog, of course, will continue in perpetuity.

DM: THE TORONTOIST CALLED YOUR CONCERT SERIES "ONE OF TORONTO'S BEST KNOWN [MUSIC] PARTIES." WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE ENJOY THEM SO MUCH?

AP: When we started the live series, there weren't too many people doing what we do, or at least doing it well. As for its success, I… have no idea. We booked good bands that brought a lot of their own people at first, then [we] gradually developed a reputation for booking big parties. I've been doing this for years and still have no real idea of what makes a successful show. I suppose we wrote press releases and got some coverage, but I don't know [what] effect that had on [our] success.

DM: WHAT IS THE SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTORY? WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO START THE DIRECTORY?

AP: We started that to help out other bands/promoters who wanted to get in touch with people we've posted about. In general, it's nice having a place where you can go to see everybody we've covered in the long history of the blog. This reminds me, though — we need to update that thing!

DM: WHICH CANADIAN ELECTRONIC ARTISTS SHOULD LISTENERS BE LOOKING OUT FOR?

AP: Ken Park. He made one of the best albums of the year this year. Marie Davidson is also someone really special, both through her solo work, and her stuff with Essaie Pas… I think my fellow writers and editors would disown me if I didn't mention Chevalier Avant Garde. They have been a staff favourite since the release of their debut record Heterotopias in 2012, and keep producing great records. Lastly, there's Silkken Laumann… The new project from Rolf Klausener of The Acorn is a great electro-dance pop group.

DM: WHAT IS SO GREAT ABOUT MUSIC BLOGGING? WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM WRITING ABOUT MUSIC ON OTHER TYPES OF MEDIA PLATFORMS?

AP: It's pretty hassle free. You're not posting a big grand opinion about anything — you're just helping people get their stuff out there. There isn't as much timeliness either — we can freely post about something that came out months ago if we wanted.

DM: WHAT DO YOU THINK IS IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN ELECTRONIC MUSIC?

AP: I think it's going to continue being quite great. There are always ebbs and flows in genres within the zeitgeist, and sometimes electro will be part of it, and sometimes not. That doesn't mean that people will stop making it. And we'll be there to cover it.

DM: WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF MUSIC BLOGGING?

AP: The future of blogging is a bit in doubt. There isn't much money in it, and it's… a passion project for a lot of people. The blog world is getting smaller and smaller as the old guard starts moving on with their lives. The… grand tastemakers will probably keep going, but it's easy for smaller sites to get discouraged when [they're] just starting out. What I would like to see is more small niche-blogs like us for other genres/regions… The main thing I discovered doing this is how plentiful the talent pool is right now, and know there is so much more out there that we're not covering because it's not part of the mandate.

Querobin Mendoza is a first year Life Sciences student. Lover of mitochondria, protein synthesis, and everything else in the field of biology, Querobin also enjoys live music, fashion blogs, and chai tea lattes. When it comes to music, she is open to anything. Some of her favourite artists include the Rolling Stones, Nirvana, Marina and the Diamonds, One Direction, and the Grateful Dead. Her favourite album of all time would probably be the Mulan soundtrack (but she'll never admit it).

DORA BORAS

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO STUDENT MUSICIAN PROFILE

NAME
AARON RAMBHAJAN (OF LOOSE ENDS COLLECTIVE)

YEAR OF STUDY
SECOND YEAR

PROGRAM
DOUBLE MAJOR IN ART HISTORY AND PSYCHOLOGY

INSTRUMENTS
PIANO, BASS, DRUMS, FLUTE

MUSICAL BACKGROUND
Rambhajan started playing the piano when he was three and a half years old, later picking up the flute in the sixth grade as a part of the school's music program. Dissatisfied with the music around him, he began to write around the age of thirteen. This prompted him to eventually pick up bass guitar and drums, enabling him to evolve his ideas into expression.

ABOUT LOOSE ENDS COLLECTIVE
A multi-media body of nine contributors, the members of the collective all attended the same arts high school in Caledon, Ontario. Drawn together by a communal appreciation of rap music and an inclination to start composing their own sound, the collective saw the first traces of its origins early on in their high school years. Gradually gaining members and interest, the collective has been balanced by the opinions and interest of all its members. Each member's personal style remains distinctive, but flexible when collaborating.

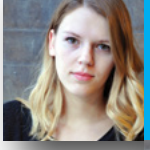
INSPIRATIONS AND INFLUENCES
Exposed to classic rock bands such as Queen and Led Zeppelin from a young age, Rambhajan developed a musical taste oriented towards hard rock, including bands such as Billy Talent and Animals As Leaders. Later, Kanye West's My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy would add another dimension to his iTunes, and a passionate, inevitable rap phase ensued. Currently, his preferences have expanded to include a more post-rock palate, namely Sigur Rós and the Antlers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Rambhajan's biggest accomplishment as a musician and a member of a multi-media collective has been releasing music, unafraid of the judgments of the public, as well as his own. He finds that creating a substantial piece of art with people whose opinions and styles he respects is enough of a reward by itself. What has been established by the symbiotic relationships founded in the collective has created a beneficial foundation for all involved, both providing the members with a supportive base to launch off of, and strengthening the collective itself. Rambhajan finds this chemistry incredibly important to the process of making any type of art with more than one author. He is proud of all the projects released by the collective and the attention they have gained.

FUTURE PLANS AND RELEASES
Rambhajan intends to move to Boston to attend music school to expand on his technique and application as a musician and producer. As a member of a collective, Loose End's next project, to be released in the following months, remains ambiguous to the public; however, Aaron is currently producing albums for three local solo artists: Atileo Tedoldi and Jordan Omstead (both members of the collective), and Kyle Nethersole. Those records are set to be released in the new year. Until then, Loose End Collective can be found through their YouTube page (https://www.youtube.com/user/looseendscollective) for updates, videos and previously released projects.

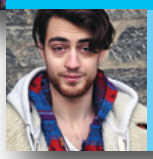
Dora Boras is a first-year Arts and Humanities student hoping to pursue majors in Cinema Studies and English. She enjoys Joy Division un-ironically and using punk as an adjective. Synonyms for Dora include "trill" and "traplord."

demo's FAVOURITE ALBUMS OF 2014



Claire Cowan is a first-year aspiring Book and Media Studies major, who is currently debating another major. Sometimes, she spends hours seeking out common trending topics amongst multiple music blogs, but other times she believes her time would be effectively spent by over-watching Christmas movies. While alone on the train from time to time, she loses herself in thought, attempting to craft her fantasy concert line-up (T-Pain and James Blake are currently headlining). Claire is an aspiring music journalist seeking inspiration, new sounds, and concerts.

Emma Doerksen is a second-year student taking a double major in Philosophy and Cinema Studies. She enjoys art-making, filmmaking, concert-going, and people-watching. Her musical highlight of the year was covering herself in sparkles and dancing hrself clean at the Knife show last spring.



Erik Masson used to read about dead people. Now he no longer exists.

Odesza – *In Return*

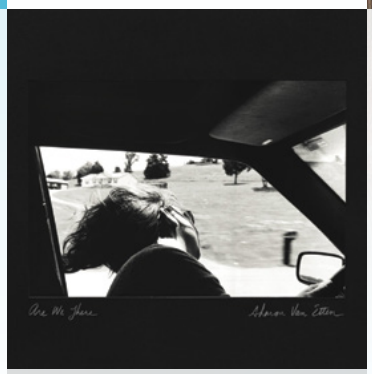
(Ninja Tune)

Electronic is a diverse genre. While some seek fast tempos and heavy drops, others crave refined production. Hailing from Seattle, Clayton Knight and Harrison Mills make up Odesza. *In Return* is the duo's sophomore album, which includes their single "Say My Name." Transitioning into tracks that give clean R&B bass undertones and high pitched synths, Odesza keeps consistent with some relatively unknown features on the majority of their tracks. This takes the attention off of how famous the vocalists may be, and instead focuses on the rad variation of artists throughout the album. Is chillwave dead, or just being revamped to mean something different? Odesza's light and summery tracks are giving this genre a whole new face. **— Claire Cowan**

FKA twigs – *LP1*

(Young Turks)

The most captivating album this year is British recording artist FKA twigs' *LP1*. Although it has the sweet and indulgent elements of pop music, *LP1* is edgy and experimental. FKA twigs is uncompromisingly strange, and the result is a very unique aesthetic — her sound is both heavy and light, seductive and uncomfortable, sexy and strange. This contrast is most clearly demonstrated in the track "Lights On," which features discordant, tinny synth set against her ethereal vocals. The production on this album is much richer and more dynamic than on her previous EPs, and is noticeably more influenced by R&B and hip-hop. It is hard not to be seduced by the album. **— Emma Doerksen**



Sharon Van Etten – *Are We There*

(Jagjaguwar)

2014 was a rough year for me, featuring pain and confusion of skyscraper-like proportions. When you are feeling such huge emotions, it is hard to find music to reflect your mood. However, when I heard Sharon Van Etten's *Are We There*, I immediately felt everything I needed — commiseration, sympathy, and compassion. While that may sound cheesy and sentimental, that does not change the fact that I relied on this album to get me through all of my sad moments. Objectively, every song on the album is well-crafted and placed perfectly within the track listing to stir up some sort of emotion. Furthermore, the lyrics are precise enough to tell you a poetic story, but broad enough so that everyone can relate to the underlying darkness throughout *Are We There*. **— Emily Scherzinger**

Avey Tare's Slasher Flicks – *Enter the Slasher House*

(Domino)

You are probably not prepared for the human drum machine that is Jeremy Hyman. If you see Slasher Flicks in the flesh, your eyes may weep from their inability to make sense of the blur of arms and legs spinning around his solemn face. Before you can fully recover, Avey Tare and Angel Deradoorian will cascade into your ears with beautiful harmonies, chest-pounding bass synths, and spinning guitar riffs. While you are trying to figure out where the rest of the band is, you may realize that pretty much everything is Angel toying with several synths simultaneously while her voice creates alien choirs over Avey's irresistible melodies. Or, you may realize that you should probably just be dancing, and do so. Go to town. **— Erik Masson**

Mac DeMarco – *Salad Days*

(Captured Tracks)

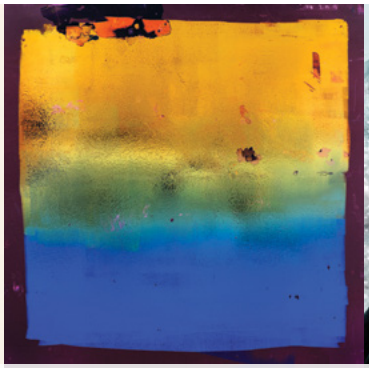
This album from Mac DeMarco is a musical embodiment of his interpretation of the title Salad Days, filled with themes of love and youth. Perfectly pulling together DeMarco's quirky personality and raw talent, it feels like a beautiful, breezy daydream. Melodic vocals coo witty lyrics on top of groovy slacker music in a way that makes you want to sway your head to and fro. Cool, wistful, and a bit unconventional, this record will leave you caught up in Mac's mellow world. **— Gwen Reid**

Real Estate – *Atlas*

(Domino)

Real Estate is known for wearing placidity well; it is no surprise, then, that the band's third full-length release, *Atlas*, boasts the signature basket-weave guitar lines and laid-back vocals of *Real Estate* and *Days* before it. The difference is that *Atlas* is the band's most polished and most mature-sounding record to date, dealing with themes of anxiety and time slipping through one's fingers. If *Real Estate* was a languid summer of suburban ennui and *Days* was a crisp autumn of suburban acceptance laced with angst, then *Atlas* is a grey, icy winter of suburban melancholy; the melodies still soar, but they are weighed down by the sobering sadness that comes with the realities of growing older.

— Maria Sokulsky Dolnycky



Ian William Craig – *A Turn of Breath*

(Recital)

There is something immensely personal about the way drone music affects people. The manner in which meaningless words ebb in and out of drones makes for a beautifully delicate album. A Turn of Breath wanders through an absent mind: the sound of car engines, fragments of multiple conversations forming an entirely meaningless string of words, and the hubbub of daily life that always seems to be just outside the reach of memory. For an album in which the ephemeral seems to have weight, the fall of silence is disenchanting, and breaks the spell of this daydream-like remembrance, only to let your mind drift again.

— David Recoskie

Yoko Kanno – *Terror in Resonance Original Soundtrack*

(Aniplex)

Yoko Kanno's seamless and explosive creation leaves listeners with a gaping hole in their hearts. The eclectic orchestra of dirty techno, Indian tabla, Icelandic singers, and Japan's iconic melody piano fearlessly narrate what life would feel like if it teetered on the edge of terrorist threats. Every emotion is exploited. The nostalgic "is" whisks down Tokyo's twilight highways, while "saga" skulks behind alleyways, promising mischief at every corner. By the end of the album, Kanno shows no mercy, enveloping the listener in the alien, empty feeling of gazing at a city that could at any moment collapse into a silent, dusty horizon.

— Rachel Evangeline Chiong

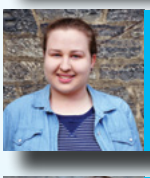
Cibo Matto – *Hotel Valentine*

(Chimera)

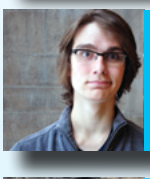
Back after a fifteen year hiatus, the art pop duo muse, "I wonder how many people know that life is like this: staying at a hotel, renting times, renting a body." The 38 minute album is a voyage in the outer galaxies to a residence for playful exploration of our disembodied selves, filled with funk, quirky, driving beats, smooth melodies, and absurdist lyrics that continuously overlap and transition with seamless ease. In the end, you will be left floating, yet electrified with an awareness of that locus of pulse deep inside from which rhythm and life emerge. **— Haley Park**

Gwen Reid is a first-year Life Sciences student who has no idea what to major in. While intensely procrastinating, she enjoys reading, watching sad movies, and exploring new music. Gwen loves to wander around big cities, and will tell anyone who will listen how much she loves the Strokes.

Haley Park is a fourth-year student studying psychology. She probably thinks too much, and is always working on trying to figure out the secret of the universe. When not thinking about that, she likes bike riding at night. Haley also loves music – she is particularly drawn to shoegaze, female vocals, and threes-against-twos in rhythms.



Maria Sokulsky-Dolnycky is in her fifth year at U of T, majoring in Linguistics and minoring in German Studies and Music History & Culture. When not wandering around her native Toronto on foot, she can be found biking by the lake, hunting for used books in the Junction, daydreaming in her backyard, and listening to music while doing all of the above – her preferred genres include freak folk, art rock, and baroque pop.



David Recoskie is a first-year Life Sciences student who hails from the exotic land of Mississauga, Ontario. When he is not busy being graded on how well he pours vials of dangerous liquids into one another, he enjoys playing bass and guitar and even sleeping every now and then, if he is lucky. His musical biases include shoegaze, noise rock, and art pop, and his other interests include cinema and literature.

Rachel Evangeline Chiong is a first-year student who studies courses with lots of words and attends lectures in rooms that are in buildings. She really likes to try out new things. Once she packed apple and orange slices in the same Tupperware and it tasted just like candy, which is the most important thing she has learned in university so far. Her favourite study spot is outside the CN Tower, and when she's really tired she can be found sleeping in the Hart House Chapel.

SOYBOMB

THE HIDDEN HISTORY BEHIND THE TORONTO DIY PUNK VENUE

ATOUSA BLAIR

In 1977, Toronto's first punk club, Crash 'n' Burn, opened in the basement of the Centre for Experimental Art and Communication. The opening of Crash 'n' Burn allowed for the evolution of punk in Toronto's music scene and marked the beginning of a new era of music in the city. Since then, several other DIY venues have come and gone in Toronto's music scene, proving that it is rare for DIY venues to maintain the longevity achieved by Soybomb, which has been around for over eleven years. Even Crash 'n' Burn only lasted a mere three months before complaints from other residents in the building forced its closing.

A HOME FOR PUNKS

In contrast to other DIY venues in Toronto, Soybomb is first and foremost a home. As described by owner and founder Jason Wydra, Soybomb is equivalent to the house of your childhood friend who had the most lenient parents. Despite being a home to several people (currently six), Soybomb throws a house party a couple of times a month, featuring great bands and cheap beer. Unlike other venues in the city, Soybomb is not run as a business — Wydra charges a mere $200 as a venue fee to promoters, which does not cover minimum wage for the amount of hours put into each show, and the amount of money put into developing the space over the years.

"I am never going to make my money back, but that's not why I do it," Wydra admits. "I do this because I friggin' love it, and get to host some of my favourite bands in the world… in what amounts to our living room."

Rather than beginning with grand ambitions of making Soybomb the place it is today, Wydra allowed the venue to evolve naturally by doing the things he loved. Throughout the 90s, Wydra played in bands and put on DIY shows with friends. In 2000, Wydra tested out the prototype of Soybomb's unique DIY shows at Siesta Nouveaux. After a few years, Soybomb relocated to its current space in 2003.

When Wydra first moved into the current space with his brother and friend, all avid skateboarders, their main priority for the house was having enough room to build a halfpipe. Now, during shows, the halfpipe serves as the performance space for bands and has become an iconic element of the venue.

LIVING AMONGST THE WRECKAGE

Since its relocation to its current space, Wydra notes the development of the neighbourhood and its influence on Soybomb. "When we first started doing shows in this space we didn't have problems with the neighbours," Wydra notes. "But going back ten years ago, the neighbourhood was a lower income party area for punks."

As the area became more developed, Wydra had to be conscious of how to make Soybomb sustainable. Early on, the decision was made to put on shows only once or twice a month to avoid upsetting the neighbours and drawing unwanted attention to the venue. Wydra's modest and sensible approach to the maintenance of the venue has allowed Soybomb to exceed the lifespan of most DIY venues.

Initially, Wydra never perceived of the concerts as such. Instead, he viewed them as parties with friends' bands playing. It was not until 2008 that bands outside of Wydra's friend group began to approach him to ask to play in the venue. Now, Wydra has to turn down 20-30 bands for each one that plays.

BEHIND THE NAME

The aspects of Soybomb beyond the social and musical elements are best reflected in the evolution of its name. In 2000, after moving to the city, Wydra planned to start his own deck company. As a skateboarder and vegetarian with left-leaning social justice views, Wydra wanted the name of his company to reflect his ideologies. Originally working with the name "Soy Brand," a friend suggested the name "Soybomb." Upon later reflection, Wydra realized that his friend was likely referencing Michael Portnoy's 1998 Grammys stunt, when Portnoy jumped on stage during Bob Dylan's performance with the words "SOY BOMB" painted across his chest. The name immediately resonated as it mixed together iconography pertaining to Wydra's interests and ethics.

Although a lover of all types of music, Wydra has noticed that Soybomb has accumulated a dedicated audience over the years. Featuring a band too far outside the realm of this taste runs the risk of a bad experience for the artist as well as the audience. "My problem with booking shows out of the general punk thing is that something like that is very special… and I don't want to put on a show… if I don't think I can promote it to be well-attended," Wydra acknowledges. "I don't ever want artists to play here, especially artists I like, to go away not having the best experience or one of the best experiences of their life."

PUNK SENSIBILITY

Soybomb evolved naturally from modest ambitions and good intentions, and, after eleven years, it has become one of Toronto's most beloved venues.

"When we first started doing shows here, we had a crappy PA system and three microphones," Wydra recounts. "It took time to make it better over the years… I like to think that I ask myself enough questions constantly to keep myself honest in terms of why I do things and I do things for the right reasons."

Atousa Blair is a first-year student studying Architecture. She likes music and is grateful to have found a place like Demo to write about sweet tunes and work with some sweet people.

SOUTH AFRICA'S WORST NIGHTMARE

DIE ANTWOORD AND THE NOT SO REVIVAL OF ZEF

AYLA SHIBLAQ

Anyone who has read *VICE* in the past year has probably heard of the South African group Die Antwoord. Die Antwoord consists of Yo-Landi Vi$$er, DJ Hi-Tek, and Watkin Tudor Jones, better known as Ninja. Throughout their albums, which includes hit songs such as "Wat Kyk Jy?" and "I Fink U Freeky," they frame their style and physical imagery as zef.

"Zef" is a slang term for working-class South Africans. Named after the Ford Zephyr, a cheap and popular car in South Africa, it represents a group of South Africans that would be better described as "'white trash" by Western standards. Over time, the imagery, along with the changes in the South African political climate, evolved and, in its purest form, died out.

Many critics have framed zef as a strictly white South African phenomenon. Considering that zef gained popularity around the 1970s during apartheid, the "purist" zef imagery is predominantly white. On the other hand, the revival of zef in the modern day is purely fun, with no intention of being a political statement. In many ways, the genre attempts to move on from apartheid altogether in spite of its origins. Like Macklemore's hit song, "Thrift Shop," zef tries to glamorize what we normally see as "tacky," thereby making it desirable in society.

The modern revival of zef is monopolized by Die Antwoord and friends — Jack Parow, another South African zef artist, is probably the only artist in the genre who does not work with Jones on a consistent basis. Everyone else who is considered zef falls under the Die Antwoord umbrella, considering Jones is a member of nearly all of these zef groups, including but not limited to The Man Who Never Came Back and The Constructus Corporation. Every other South African rapper is not considered zef in either in imagery or in sound.

The sound of zef is not something that is easily noticeable by listeners of zef; however, it does exist in subtle ways. For example, when listening to Die Antwoord's albums, *O* and *Ten$ion*, they are heavy on Afrikaans and Xhosa, lighter in mood, and strong in messages about not only their identity, but their place in the rap game. In this case, zef may be seen as reliant on the imagery within the music, but zef truly lies within a very particular flow pattern: the pattern of beats in both Die Antwoord's work, as well as Jack Parow's, are simplistic and predictable in order to accompany the song and the lyrical intonation.

The revival of zef is in itself, though monopolized, quite interesting. Whether or not it was Die Antwoord's intention to spread zef imagery or even zef sound is questionable — did Die Antwoord want to create zef as an entirely new genre of music and style?

If there was a revival, it has failed. In their most recent album, Donker Mag, Die Antwoord preserves their fun-loving attitude, but almost to the point of stupidity. A lot of their Afrikaner charm is diminished and the music is not substantially intriguing — they have not entirely preserved their image as a zef group. Another indication of their failure is the fact no other zef artists have emerged from their revival other than Jack Parow, who heavily participated on the making of *O*.

Currently, Die Antwoord's sound is "Americanized." In terms of production quality, this is not necessarily a bad thing, and hearing Aphex Twin and Die Antwoord together in the song "Ugly Boy" is super cool, but this is just not the kind of evolution fans were hoping for, because Die Antwoord's image as a South African group has been lost.

This might have been why Die Antwoord have not attempted to preserve their imagery further in their music as they have established themselves overseas: the underlying political ignorance in their music and the usage of zef is intolerable. The image of the Afrikaner is one that negatively reminds people, especially South Africans, of apartheid. As a result, some critics in South Africa, according to a *Wall Street Journal* article, have called Die Antwoord "South Africa's worst nightmare."

Unfortunately, zef is a style that is intended for fun and games amidst a sinister, underlying political ignorance. This may be the reason why Die Antwoord have abandoned their image of zef and being an Afrikaner altogether. Since the group's emergence, North American culture has glamourized what used to be tacky, such as PC graphics and styles such as normcore, making it significantly easier for Die Antwoord to maintain the fun tackiness of zef without pushing the political issues it implies. This is why Die Antwoord, though well-liked in North America, will never spread the zef style in hip-hop. Die Antwoord in Afrikaans may translate to "the answer," but it is not the answer that anyone was looking for.

Die Antwoord. Media photo.

Ayla Shiblaq is a second-year student from Victoria College studying Political Science, which also translates to a Bachelor of Arts in cynicism and anxiety attacks. Her hobbies include but are not limited to using the term "Kafka-esque" to piss off English majors, collecting an unhealthy amount of black clothing, and using old slang ironically because #yolo. She can be found frantically walking up and down the streets of Toronto pretending like she has somewhere to be in order to avoid sponsorship sellers. Apparently, she listens to and writes about music or something.

KILL YOU

An Exploration of the Suffering Artist

The history of music is one long soap opera, including archetypal characters, scandalous plot twists, and storylines that repeat themselves over and over again. One of the most pervasive archetypes in this history is that of the tortured artist. This character can take many forms: the genius wasting away in isolation, the mentally ill singer who drowns at an early age, or the rock star overdosing in a million dollar house. The media suggests that these are the faces of modern genius despite the suffering that they experience, and audiences are consistently enthralled by one of their favourite narratives playing out repeatedly. Essentially, audiences want their artists to live the lives of fictional characters, but pay the real world price.

The History of the Suffering Artist

It is an assumed fact that artists have to suffer in order to make good art. This unspoken, universally accepted rule leads to infamous situations such as Jim Morrison claiming his entire family was dead, when in reality they were perfectly healthy and living on the other side of America.

The trajectory of the figure of the artist is well-known: artists supposedly start out as young and innocent, searching for something meaningful amidst their misery and, in the process, build a body of profound works. After these works gain attention in the public eye, the artist will begin to make money; however, the artist slowly begins to lose something. In the face of money, the artist either sells out or continues to profit as they grow up. Both are changes that affect their art, because they are now "normal" and happy.

Where does this leave the artist's fans? Being "normal" by societal standards goes against all the rules of "cool," which is what fans demand from their favourite artists. After being normalized in the public eye, the artist is a broken chair — all the original parts are the same, but they just do not hold up.

Of course, there is one easy way to escape this depressing and unfair fate: die. This is not a new idea by any means, nor is it confined to music. Vincent van Gogh and Frederich Nietzsche, among many other artists, are exalted partly due to their suffering. In comparison, their other equally talented, yet happier, peers are lost to the void of time.

This cultural phenomenon makes personal suffering into a currency that can be exchanged for respect and longevity. In the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, "Suffering is justified as soon as it becomes the raw material of beauty."

The expectancy of suffering artists creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. If everyone knows that suffering is a prerequisite to make good art, artists will put themselves through suffering. Once the decision to inflict suffering upon oneself has been made, it is difficult to draw the line before the drug abuse, self-harm, and more begin to get out of control. When this happens, it shows that the myth of the artist as a tragic character is more important to society than the artist as an actual human being. Thus, the cycle continues, and the archetype is allowed to grow ever more popular, creating an exclusive set of guidelines for anyone who wants to be considered a "serious artist."

Jim Morrison. Media photo.

UR IDOLS

Sara Bimo

The Truth Behind the Matter

There is one main question that emerges from all this: why? The answer lies in our culture's paradoxical obsession with both youth and death. The tortured artist is the perversely perfect solution to this obsession, as their suffering is seen as a precursor to death; youth is desirable and fleeting, death is unknowable and eternal, and audiences want both. This combination can only be explored in art. This is the reason why horror movies always involve the torment of beautiful young women, and why the young and nubile are portrayed alongside symbols of death and decay in art. More than anything, our culture dictates to want what you cannot have and, as suggested by Sartre, "Death gives us sleep, eternal youth, and immortality."

Another question that arises is: is all of this true? Are our artists only worth something if they suffer? It is hard to believe otherwise, when there are examples all around us, such as Amy Winehouse and Kurt Cobain. Even artists like Lana Del Rey have banked on this trope by creating mysterious, tortured personas for themselves. Can we ever replace the rawness of youth and sadness in our art with an essence more desirable?

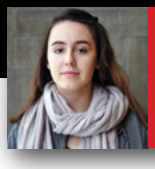
Some artists have fought against this unwritten rule that only pain can create great art. David Bowie's latest album, *The Next Day*, is just as complex, riveting, and innovative as his early, younger works. Singer/songwriter Sting speculated in the documentary *All We Are Saying*, "I only know that people who are getting into this archetype of the tortured poet end up really torturing themselves to death. And I'm thinking… I would just like to be happy."

Further, there are suffering artists who have never produce anything good simply because they are not good. Suffering does not necessarily make art beautiful. Instead, talented artists make suffering beautiful.

Audience Cruelty

It is cruel to expect people to be in pain simply because we as an audience find this interesting. By placing so much emphasis on youth and death, we are ignoring all the beauty that can be found in other stages of life. There is art everywhere, begging to be noticed — there is art in childhood, in growing up, in settling down, and in getting old. Through complacency and the inability to innovate, we as a culture refuse to accept profundity from anything other than a very specific source: a young tortured soul, commonly taking the form of a beautiful white male.

Ultimately, the beauty of happiness is more subtle than the beauty of pain, but it is more healthy. The artist who has found himself may be harder to appreciate than the one who is slowly dying or going insane, but this artist is just as valuable and interesting. It would be a great step forward for music if their contributions were equally appreciated.



Sara Bimo is a first-year student studying Life Sciences at Victoria College. She is the proud owner of Heelies, every David Bowie album ever made, and a grand total of $26.49 in her bank account. Her numerous hobbies include watching foreign game shows, going to weird parties, and having existential crises at inappropriate times. Sara is still scared of the dark and those massive mosquitoes that don't actually bite but still look horrifying. Sara is a big fan of her parents, the month of December, and Arnold Schoenberg. She is a very passionate advocate of normcore and the Oxford comma, and a big supporter of corporate leaks and Jarvis Cocker's solo career.

OF HEART AND HEAD

A DISCUSSION ON MUSIC AND ACTIVISM WITH LIDO PIMIENTA

JESSA EVENDEN

Music is arguably useless. It does not keep us dry in a rain storm, grant us a few more hours of sleep, or keep us warm when we have to hike to class. However, music is used to mend a broken heart, bring a party back to life, and provide the perfect cinematic soundtrack to a life-changing event. Music can also act as a catalyst for social change. Acting as a platform from which artists can project their messages, music is a valuable vehicle. It carries political and social ideas from the hearts of musicians everywhere to their respective audiences. Through taking the shapes of infectious ear worms, costuming at shows, and even album titles, musicians with strong convictions have been making themselves heard for decades. Many artists who pour their hearts and souls into their sounds also have strong opinions on politics and social justice, and it is no surprise that it often translates into the music they release.

ACTIVISM MUSIC: THEN AND NOW

Music has played a part in activism for as long as anyone can remember. Activism movements have a long and rich history, but initially gained momentum within the North American music scene during the civil war. They began to pick up steam during the 60s and 70s subculture movements, coming to a pinnacle with the Plastic Ono Band and John Lennon's infamous peace anthem, "Imagine." Looking back on this history, it is clear that many artists believed so strongly in their political and social affiliations that it is impossible to separate them. For example, Morrissey had an infamous meltdown during a concert, resulting in McDonald's agreeing to stop serving meat during his show.

Perhaps it is a sign of a more socially aware society, but contemporary artists now appear to be providing a stream of social consciousness. In a time of active social justice among young people, there has been an increase in the amount of music that is being created with specific and important messages. Some popular musicians are using their fame to reach larger audiences, spreading truths across social media and gaining cult-like followings for their impactful opinions. Artists are using social media as a vehicle to express these views. For example, Lil B uses his popular Twitter account as a forum for a running social commentary. Childish Gambino also unleashed the full force of his own social justice on his Twitter page in response to the protests and events in Ferguson, Missouri, ending his poetry with a tweet reading, "i honestly don't give two fucks if you hate me. none of this was ever about me. and i hope you understand that."

Activism is bigger than artists or their online communities. Even the most recent Polaris Music Prize winner, Tanya Tagaq, has spoken out often on Twitter, posting a "sealfie," a photograph of her baby beside a dead seal, in order to show support of the Inuit seal hunt. Although controversial, Tagaq took the opportunity to present her opinion on an issue that mattered greatly to her community.

ACTIVISM CLOSER TO HOME

The Toronto music scene is full of musicians speaking actively about a spectrum of issues that are both global and local. The 2014 Toronto In Bloom benefit concert featured bands performing their versions of different songs made popular by the band Nirvana, raising funds to bring support to teens, mental health, and the arts.

Lido Pimienta, a Columbian-born artist who creates incredible fusions between experimental electronic beats and Indigenous styles, has always been an activist. When I asked what sparked her interest in activism, Pimienta simply answered, "I've always been politically conscious… [and] active, and I grew up in Columbia… and I've always been in bands and always making music so it just happened. It's just something that happens. It just comes out."

Some musicians are born with an activist soul in the same way that most musicians have been musical since childhood. With information readily accessible that detail the injustices globally and nationally, as well as the short-comings of governments that put citizens at risk, it is easy to wonder why even more musicians do not make music with a social conscience.

"Most of the bands that I know in the scene don't associate themselves with politics at all because they're

not affected at all by politics in the country," Pimienta explains. "When you're an immigrant now and you get a citizenship… you're at risk of it being revoked if the government thinks or suspects you're a spy. And if you're a musician, that affects you. And you will most likely talk about that experience. If you grow up in Canada, white, with certain advantages… that are provided via your parents being upper middle class… your music is not going to be so politically conscious because it's not your reality."

Pimienta makes it clear that acknowledging and experiencing social injustice are two completely different things, and, although musicians may be aware of current events and marginalization, it may not be their place to speak out after all. "The neighbourhood you grow up in, the country that you're from — it all affects your music," Pimienta outlines. "There are more people that have advantages, [so] their music is not going to be around socially conscious themes, and it would be hypocritical of them to do so."

Sadly, many aspiring musicians with political power and experiences to share will never get the opportunity to do so. "Many of us need to take other jobs in order to make music," Pimienta explains. "Especially if you're a person of colour, and your parents are immigrants, and they work terrible jobs, they want you to… make money, so that you don't have to go through what they went through. So, often, being in the arts is a no." When wondering why oppressed groups do not use music as a means to express themselves, Pimienta simply states, "Being able to make music is a privilege."

THE WEIGHT ON EVERYONE'S SHOULDERS

There is also a stigma that, as soon as an artist brings a political message to one of their shows, the audience's experience of the show loses lightness and frivolity, making a musician's set boring and dry. This is a concept that Pimienta pokes fun at, joking in the voice of a disappointed patron, "My party's over — I won't have fun or enjoy my beer fully because this girl is making me think about politics and colonialism."

However, this is not the case, as fun and education are not mutually exclusive. Shows with Pimienta are fun and lighthearted gigs. "People dance and… jump and it's an experience where I invite people to love each other," Pimienta explains. "So that's a big message too."

HOW TO GET EDUCATED

With so much information out there, and with so many musicians making music with impactful messages full of heart and soul and personal experience, adults without social awareness are beginning to run out of excuses. If one is not willing to look into social justice independently, allowing bright, poignant music to introduce you is far from a chore.

"I hope that they can be inspired. I hope that they can pick up some books or blogs that talk about the truth, and they make conscious decisions to not be subservients to evil," Pimienta explains passionately. "I just want people to leave the show inspired, and feel like they can change how shitty and ugly things are."

The world is the oyster of anyone with an interest in becoming educated and aware. Rappers like L1EF and Angel Haze continue to create music reflecting the lives of LGBTQ+ people of colour, and there is boundless online content merely clicks away if time is spent investigating.

It is not the job of a musician to educate, and it is not a songwriter's responsibility to teach their audience everything they ought to know. Instead, musicians open a door to their listeners, catching their attention through danceable, singable, enjoyable tracks that hammer home a meaningful message. Musical activism has its roots in the souls of artists, and grows legs through consumption. Its final form is more akin to a moving, beating heart than a simple textbook.

"I feel like people do not need to be hand-fed," Pimienta states. "The job that I give myself is to share truths."

Jessa Evenden is a first-year student, a fan of folk punk, pop music circa 2007, and all things Blink-182. When not in class, she can usually be found in her dorm room watching Netflix or stalking celebrities' Facebook accounts. Jessa's favourite things include crop tops, Instagram and tater tots. Her hidden talent is curating impeccable and amusing Snapchat stories. Jessa is at her happiest when discussing feminism and culture, and she feels a special kinship with Kylie Jenner.

STOLEN VOICES

The Problem of Cultural Appropriation in Music

Sofia Luu

Growing up, I listened and sought out music of the "West" as though my life depended on it. Pop music was a beast that I knew very little about — it represented a place of mystery and intrigue to me. I would even watch YTV's *Hit List* every Friday night, my weekly education in what was hip and happening.

Meanwhile, most of the music that I grew up with ended up being music that I never really listened to or learned to appreciate. My mother listened extensively to music from Hong Kong and Vietnam and other surrounding countries. Being Asian-Canadian (Cantonese-Vietnamese, to be specific), this made a whole lot of sense. Cantopop and Western pop, however, were two separate, distinct entities that I never thought would come together.

Now, there are musicians who think they are pushing the envelope when they sample or cite ethnic music as an influence. For example, Avril Lavigne clearly thinks it is okay to parade around in Japanese garb as a homage and symbol of her "love" for Japan. In contemporary society, there are a lot of questionable things being done in the name of art or, in this case, music.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Violence is a theme commonly found in punk and hardcore music. In fact, some might say that violence is at the core of these genres, used as a form of resistance against hegemonic culture. Some bands are more upfront with their use of violence, such as Cocksparrer and Fucked Up, while other bands will turn a blind eye when it comes to acknowledging the weight of some of the violent symbolism or imagery that they incorporate into their music.

The Viet Cong were a Vietnamese guerrilla army who fought against the South Vietnamese government and the United States in the Vietnam War for independence. The Vietnam War was a defining Cold War conflict that left many divided over the West's involvement in a conflict so far-removed from North America. It also left an estimated two million civilians dead, and hundreds of thousands displaced in the aftermath. The conflict might have ended nearly forty years ago, but there are many still dealing with the effects of warfare and displacement. It is a conflict that still warrants many debates over the United State's involvements and intentions. It is a part of history that is often debated, twisted by popular culture and media, and many still do not know much about the scale and implications of the war.

However, venture deep into the world of music blogging and you will find a Viet Cong that looks nothing like the Vietnamese guerrilla army described in history textbooks. The post-punk band from Calgary, Viet Cong, consists of four white musicians who once explained that their drummer, Mike Wallace, "came up with [the name Viet Cong]." When asked if the members have any concerns over their band name, they explained in an interview with BYT that they "were kind of worried about having some vets working at the border, but it's been all-fine in the States so far."

Their explanation for using the name Viet Cong simplifies the complex nature and history of the Viet Cong and its place in American and Vietnamese history. Some may say that Viet Cong is just a name and their intentions are not malicious, but when it is dismissed as "just a name," it reduces such a huge event in history to being "just an event." This reduction inflicts a subtle type of violence upon those still affected by the Vietnam War, because the fact that the Viet Cong were responsible for a third of civilian casualties during the height of the Vietnam War is overlooked. So, no, it is not "just a name."

No one is questioning the band's intentions, and no one probably will. They are already releasing material to much acclaim, touring extensively, and riding the hype wave to success. In the age of search engine optimization (SEO) and Google, the more hype that is received by Viet Cong, the more they will downplay their adoption of an aspect of culture that is far-removed from theirs, and history will become increasingly buried.

APPROPRIATION OR APPRECIATION?

In Asia, the pop music industries in Japan and Korea are formidable beasts, generating hundreds of thousands of dollars for performers. It is a huge industry that has remained primarily in Asia. In comparison, Western music continues to make a huge impact in countries far beyond America and the West. No one has quite figured out the secret to "making it" in Western markets as a K-pop or J-pop star. While some say that Korean singer Psy's "Gangnam Style" has opened the door for Asian musicians to make an impact on the Western market, the model of Psy's music is one that differs greatly from the dominant formula of pop music that is prevalent in the Asian music industry.

It is incredibly difficult for an Asian musician to experience some long-lasting success in the Western music market, but it is now a trend for artists from different disciplines to

Fatima Al Qadiri. Media photo.

Sofia Luu is a full-time snacks enthusiast and professional napper. She is a member of the House of Kanye and is sometimes better at dancing than talking. She sometimes forgets she is a fourth-year student who is probably going to be in school forever because she is really indecisive.

actively seek out music that is traditionally of other cultures and reappropriate these sounds into their art. This process of accessing and using the sounds of other cultures has become incredibly easy for a large majority of Western music makers, many of which come from a place of privilege. It is with this sense of privilege within their artistry that they feel entitled to sample from the sounds of other ethnicities and cultures.

This is a process that is both damaging and silencing, because it whittles down ethnic identities to a small number of tropes and stereotypes. It is a lot harder to pinpoint and draw the line between cultural appropriation and appreciation within music, because nowadays, musicians are constantly being influenced by genres so far away from their own.

So is race something that we can hear? The answer is yes, because the tropes that exist in popular culture also exist in music. For example, the Oriental Riff is a concept invented by white Western culture to describe music that sounds "Asian," such as music that uses "Asian" sounds like the gong. This Oriental Riff is meant to reduce and simplify the variations of Asian music to one particular sound, popularized by the 1974 disco song "Kung Fu Fighting," performed by Jamaican musician Carl Douglas.

An excellent example of creating music in an incredibly globalized world — where access to music from Asia is merely a Google search away — is Fatima Al Qadiri's *Asiatisch*. At first listen, one would be quick to assume that Al Qadiri was probably heavily influenced by some experience with China, leading to this artistic obsession with the country; however, by looking a little deeper into Al Qadiri's process behind the album, it is easy to learn that Al Qadiri has never been to China before, and much of the album is constructed out of imagined ideas of China. This conception of China is heavily influenced by Western depictions and narratives of the nation. The first song, "Shanzhai," opens with Chinese singer Helen Fung singing a rendition of Sinead O'Connor's "Nothing Compares 2 U." To a non-native Chinese speaker's ears, it sounds a lot like Al Qadiri sampled a Chinese pop song, but Al Qadiri has revealed that Fung is actually singing a nonsense Mandarin version of a popular English song.

The nonsense nature of "Shanzhai" perfectly encapsulates our Western understanding and treatment of Asian culture: Western musicians notoriously cherry pick the parts of other cultures that sound appealing and incorporate these foreign sounds into their music. Borrowing from other cultures seems like a natural occurrence in our contemporary society, where inventions such as the Internet have given us access to new types of information that we never would have had access to if it were in the 1960s. However, by normalizing the sampling the music of other cultures, we are silencing the original creators of these sounds and the histories that these sounds or ideas belong to.

ARTISTIC RE

THE BENEFITS OF ARTISTIC REINVENTION

ALEXANDER SI

Recently, everyone in the music industry seems to be jumping on the bandwagon of "reinvention," changing both their musical sound and their public image. Even some of the most popular singers, such as Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus, and Rihanna, have gone through reinventions. Because their reinvented sound and image are utterly incongruous with their past, those artists are constantly in the media spotlight, judged relentlessly by spectators for their changes. However, after stripping down all the publicity stunts, it becomes clear that reinvention is vital for a recording artist, as it showcases their versatility, allows them the joy of making different kinds of music, and marks their coming of age.

The Erasure of Stereotypes

The biggest fear for a singer is arguably boredom. More specifically, artists fear that the public will always remember them as singing one particular song, essentially pigeon-holing them into one public image without much room for variation. However, this can be fixed through a reinvention. A new sound could prove to the world that this singer is adept at another genre and eventually help them break out of their prescribed image. The most recent example of this is Lady Gaga's jazz album, *Cheek to Cheek*. With this album, Lady Gaga intrigued the world and sparked a discussion about her artistic career. Most of the critics denounced her reinvention as an epic failure, claiming that she is not a jazz singer. Nevertheless, the album topped the charts, just like her previous pop records, and was recognized by many of her fans as a success.

"I was a jazz singer since I was a little girl," Lady Gaga admitted in an interview with *CBS*. "[N]obody had really picked up on it. So, when Tony asked, I got really excited." This triumph for Lady Gaga announced to the world that she can not only rule the dance floor with a pop album, but she also sounds good with a background of trumpets and horns on a jazz album. Thus, from reinventing themselves, recording artists can share their versatility with the world, as well as erase their stereotypical public persona.

Sonic Experimentation

Music is not just a sound for recording artists — it is also a toy to play with. From the variation of vocals to the use of different instruments, musicians can manipulate their sound according to their intuitions. Furthermore, the joy that comes from testing new vocals and trying out a new image can be a motive to pursue a musical career. This is exemplified in Christina Aguilera's 2006 album, *Back to Basics*. Previously, she has shocked the world with her sexually aggressive "dirrty" girl character in her 2002 record, Stripped. After Stripped, Christina Aguilera reinvented herself as a blonde pin-up girl with an incredible voice in *Back to Basics*.

"On this record, you do hear a lot of different elements to my voice. It's not just dealing with one certain form of singing," Aguilera admitted in a video that chronicles the making of the album. "I definitely like to have an eclectic variety of different sounds and even musically where I'm trying to go." Undoubtedly, this reinvention brought Aguilera so much happiness purely by the process of constantly experimenting.

Growing Pains

If the debut record marks the birth of a singer's discography, then the rest of the artist's career can be construed as a coming of age narrative. Eventually, the artist's early discography will grow into a different sound, marking the artist's coming of age. This is another reason why constant reinvention is a positive thing: the artist's early musical sound can grow and flourish. Without this progress, it would result in the death of one's career.

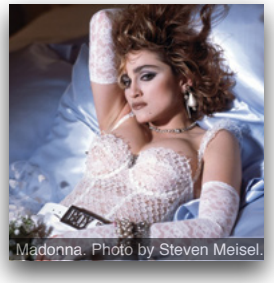
This sonic maturity is perfectly demonstrated in Madonna's 1998 album, *Ray of Light*. After the seductive era of *Erotica* in the early nineties, Madonna put her clothes back on, played Eva Perón in *Evita*, started studying Kabbalah, and gave birth to her daughter.

"I feel like when my daughter was born, I was born again," Madonna said in a 1998 interview with Oprah. "I look at life with a new set of eyes." This change was not a result of aging for her — it is also a result of her maturity as a woman and as a recording artist.

"[In *Erotica*,] I was provocative, but I don't feel like I had the whole picture of life," Madonna confessed to Oprah in a 2003 interview. "I did the best that I could with the knowledge that I had. This record is the result of finally coming to terms with who I am, and learning to love myself."

It is clear that *Ray of Light* was the result of Madonna's new vision. Songs off the album, such as "Drowned World/ Substitute for Love" and "Nothing Really Matters," detail her raw sentiments and tenderness instead of the sexual fantasy and materialistic needs apparent in *Erotica*. Also, this record has a lot of mellow ballads, like "Frozen" and "The Power of Good-Bye." These songs truly demonstrate the full maturity of Madonna's career through her sonic progressions and the thoughtfulness of the album's message.

Although all of the previously described artists went through their own metamorphoses, and were sometimes diminished by critics, they are still at the top of their games. Through their reinventions, Lady Gaga gave the world a glimpse of her well-rounded talent; Christina Aguilera indulged herself in the pleasure of experimenting new music; and Madonna matured along with the music she made. Unanimously, reinvention not only makes the artist happy, but it also dazzles the listeners, and allows the music to come of age. Moreover, through reinvention, the singer attracts more fans who may not be interested in their previous work, but are drawn to them through their new sound and image. Therefore, with ample advantages, reinvention is clearly a benefit for musicians.



Madonna. Photo by Steven Meisel.

"Reinvention is vital for a recording artist, as it showcases their versatility, allows them the joy of making different kinds of music, and marks their coming of age."

Alexander Si is a first-year student who has two things in his life that he cannot live without: music and fashion. As his constant companions for years, they have brought him so much happiness. While there is not a specific type of music that owns Alexander's undivided attention, among his eclectic musical tastes, Madonna eternally reigns as queen. Madonna has been a personal role model for Alexander, and the fuel for him to keep progressing day-by-day.

INVENTIONS

WHY REINVENTION IS BASICALLY A SHAMWOW

ARMAN ADEL

Arman Adel is a first-year student who enjoys playing guitar and soccer, and going rock climbing. In the eighth grade, Arman entered his Radiohead phase that he never really grew out of. Recently, Arman has started collecting the most ridiculous vinyl records that he can find. He has an eclectic music taste, ranging from Interpol to Casey Jones to Lil' B. The only thing that Arman fears is ghosts.

I don't think I have ever walked out of the shower and felt that my towel could be any better than it already is. It gets the job done. It dries me off, keeps me warm, and is generally a really comfortable constant in my life. Why would anyone ever want to change it? Could they honestly make it any better? Would it still be cozy and comforting or prickly and strange? To think that the fuzzy piece of cloth that dries us off and keeps us warm could become a whole new thing all together is unsettling and unwelcome, so why shouldn't the reinvention of musicians feel the same? The music we listen to is like a towel — it comforts us, it encompasses us, it dries away our sadness, our insecurities, and our anxiousness. However, music is not simply an inanimate object like a towel. Music is complex, as it transcends simple noise. Whether it is a bump-and-grind club remix or the saddest folk song, music moves us both physically and emotionally in ways very few other things do. We identify heavily with the music we listen to and it is for this reason that reinvention is bad. To change the image and sound of an artist is to lose that core identity, the meaning and emotion of their work.

Weezer's Mistake

Weezer's *Blue Album* is their greatest piece of work. In fact, Rolling Stone put out a public poll discussing the top ten Weezer songs and six of those songs belonged to *The Blue Album*. With its huge popularity among fans and casuals alike, the album is undeniably the official sound of Weezer. Released in 1994 following what was soon to be the end of the grunge era, it brought a new style of music to a generation living in post-mortem. With its clean and upbeat guitar licks and arpeggios, seamless transitions into thick distorted power chords, and lyrics tackling subjects such as love, jealousy and hanging out at the beach, *The Blue Album* speaks to the insecure teenager in all of us. With this album, Weezer had set themselves up for years of success; however, as the years went on, their popularity waned. After the poor initial reception of *Pinkerton*, Rivers Cuomo, in the biography of Weezer written by John D. Luerssen, said, "It was such a hugely painful mistake that happened in front of hundreds of thousands of people and continues to happen on a grander and grander scale and just won't go away."

So why was the later work of Weezer such a "painful mistake"? The answer lies in reinvention. Going beyond *The Blue Album*, Weezer lost that original, personal, pop-rock sound which spoke to their fan base. Beyond *Pinkerton*, the band just became generic. The intricacies and teenage moaning of *The Blue Album* gave way to dull, distorted power chords and recycled rock riffs. Weezer's later work began to mesh together and became less notable. The albums started to release fewer hits and eventually it became difficult to listen all the way through a Weezer album. By reinventing their sound, Weezer found themselves at a disconnect with their fans — their music no longer spoke out the same way it did on *The Blue Album*.

So, what could Weezer have done differently?

The Answer Lies in the White Stripes

The White Stripes are potentially one of the most iconic bands of the millennial generation — this will only become an untrue statement when new guitarists everywhere stop learning to play "Seven Nation Army." The band put out six studio albums packed with the same raw, bluesy, garage rock all throughout. In fact there was very little change to the style of The White Stripes between *Elephant* and *Icky Thump* — Meg White's drumming was still as offbeat as ever. However, after six albums, The White Stripes were faced with the age old question: what next? It was either time for reinvention or a break up and they chose the latter. The decision to break up rather than reinvent was the best decision The White Stripes could have made. The Stripes' goal of breaking up, as detailed in a statement on their website, was to "preserve what is beautiful and special about the band." Reinvention would have warped the image and meaning of The Stripes, whereas simply stopping production keeps that image intact. The fans will never witness the band's loss of identity because there was never any chance for an identity to be lost when the band forfeited.

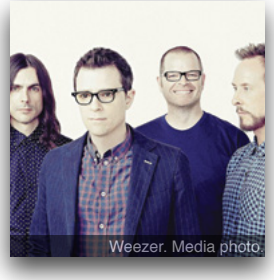
However, the Stripes' break-up did not spell an end to fans that still felt that they wanted more. After the break up, Jack White was able to explore other avenues of music with The Raconteurs and The Dead Weather, and he launched his own solo career, providing newer material for loyal fans while still preserving the image and identity of the original band.

To sum it all up, reinvention is bad. In order to reinvent, an artist really has to dig deep and sacrifice all the meaning and passion that their original work instilled in their fans for something new and unfamiliar. It taints the connections we make with the music through which we find meaning. However, every artist, no matter how popular, faces the point where they have put out way too much of the same music. So what to do?

Well, just end it.

Music is a deep emotion, and emotions are ephemeral. It is a simple fact of life — everything must come to an end. You may try to fight it, becoming decrepit and unfamiliar in your attempt to maintain relevancy, or you can accept your fate and simply move on. For that reason, the music we listen to should strive to make its way to a gradual end, respectfully setting up the stage for the next set.

"To change the image and sound of an artist is to lose that core identity, the meaning and emotion of their work."



Weezer. Media photo.

THE MASS MEDIA WRECKING BALL

HOW THE INTERNET KIND OF WRECKED MUSIC

KALINA NEDELCHEVA

Pink once sang, "You're just like a pill / Instead of makin' me feel better / You keep makin' me ill." In terms of making it as an artist, the bad medication is mass media and its sickness is spreading.

Throughout the years, different genres took the stage. There was The Beatles in the 60s, the dirty punks in the 70s, virginal Madonna in the 80s, and the grunge era in the 90s. Slowly, the business developed and caught up with the music scene. Suddenly, consumers were surrounded by sexualized music, such as "Survivor" by Destiny's Child, "Hips Don't Lie" by Shakira, and "Toxic" by Britney Spears. From the 2000s onwards, a pattern developed, in which the artist struggles to satisfy the audience. Instead of searching for inspiration in every corner of the world and writing songs from the depths of their personal abyss, musicians were told what to sing about, or even worse – the songs were pre-made for the artist to perform. Unfortunately, most of today's talent is carefully shaped by managers and sculpted by the media in accordance with current trends, and the appeals and interests of the consumerist market.

Ironically, the absence of Facebook enabled people (i.e., our parents), to be more active in their community. Believe it or not, before commercialization and the Internet, people had lives – the absence of computers and social platforms allowed them to narrow their focus on events in their own lives, rather than Jessie J's most recent wardrobe malfunction. It also allowed them to enjoy music without the prejudices that preceded it – the public's opinion was not overly dependent on social media. The only media brainwashing that was available was the television, but, fortunately for them, that had an off button.

The big bucks came later – designer homes and private pools were not directly correlated with the music industry, and most of the artists who devoted themselves to the industry did so because of their passion for the craft. Essentially, it was the love of doing something in its purest form. As a result, the artist had vision. Jimi Hendrix, who emerged through pure talent alone, dreamed of gathering musicians from all over the world in Woodstock and finding a common language through the music they played – even if it was in a different tempo, style or melody. Hendrix's music, and the creations of others like him, promoted the unification of artists, and denounced big corporations as the only means to be heard and acknowledged. Musicians praised each other's music, just like Kurt Cobain expressed admiration, both publicly and in his journals, for The Melvins. Artists acted as each other's support pillars, making up a united community. However, this is not to romanticize

Miley Cyrus. Media photo.

the idea of the starving artist – people like Patti Smith and Janis Joplin gave up everything for the opportunity to write poetry, sing their feelings, and live the dreadfully satisfying life of an artist in New York City.

Then, the Internet came in like a wrecking ball. The music business boomed, social media developed, and along with it came the ability to keep constant tabs on everybody, including beloved artists. Sadly, the focus changed – it was no longer all about the music. What makes this most noticeable is the songs on the top charts, which are mostly written in obscene language, and contain about three distinct sentences about a girl's gluteus maximus. Thanks to platforms like Facebook and Twitter, consumers began to hear more information about a nip slip than an actual album release. Why should anyone buy Rihanna's new album when it can be downloaded for free via the Internet? And besides, her latest escapades in the public eye are far more exciting.

This leads artists to consider their public image, and what it takes to maintain it. Just like a lunar eclipse, Lana Del Rey's latest effort, Ultraviolence, was obscured by her "death wish," and her clash with Frances Bean Cobain got more media attention than her newest album. Yet it has been speculated that the sullen Del Rey made the "I wish I was dead already" proclamation in order to maintain the image she had built for herself: a passive aggressive "Queen of Disaster."

So what builds a successful career in the modern music industry? The glamour of death and depression may be the foundation that Del Rey built off of, but sex and drugs can also be the a musician's building blocks. For example, Miley Cyrus was pretty strategic in the development of her rising stardom – instead of gaining fame through her music, her music gained fame through her. Her controversial Instagram account and scandalous outfits certainly outraged the public, and thus proved that sex sells, and that there is no such thing as bad publicity.

There are some positive sides to the mass media monster that has come to control every aspect of consumerist lives, such as providing the artist with a platform to emerge and build an international audience, an opportunity that was lacking in previous decades. Shows like *The Voice*, as well as sites like Bandcamp and YouTube, give a helping hand to today's talent. For example, pop duo Karmin was noticed through posting covers of famous songs frequently on YouTube. Even Philadelphia rapper Lil Dicky, after extensively abusing his bar mitzvah money to make high quality videos, went on to start a Kickstarter to raise money for a tour to much success.

However, even in the age of mass media, some artists do it the old-fashioned way. For example, the Black Keys were signed, and through extensive touring at festivals and small clubs, along with frequent album releases, the band slowly built a loyal underground fan base, which eventually developed into a huge mainstream following. The pureness of music is still somewhat preserved nowadays, as the Black Keys' latest album, *Turn Blue*, was partly inspired by Dan Auerbach's divorce, a scandal that did not receive an extensive amount of media attention over the album's release. This was a reassuring instance in which music came before scandal.

There is no doubt that there is still character in the music industry that is battling the soul-sucking, money-grabbing aspects of the business world. More good would come if people turned their backs on gossip and opened their ears to music. Turn off technology for a day, go to a park, sit in the grass with a guitar, pass it around, and see what happens.

Kalina Nedelcheva is a second-year student majoring in Book and Media Studies who writes deep, profound poems all day, and draws punny comics when exam time hits. Kalina experiences catharsis on a daily basis by putting on an album of her choosing and promptly sketching something. She has an unhealthy, life-threatening caffeine addiction and while some want drugs, she prefers pugs.

TOO MANY COOKS?

THE PLIGHT OF THE SOLO MUSICIAN

DAVID RECOSKIE

The primary "goal" of art can be grandly generalized as self-expression. Classically, painters paint and writers write because these actions and their resulting products allow them to express some sort of emotion or idea that they are unable to communicate in any other form. This is the same case with producing music; however, while most paintings and pieces of writing can be attributed to a sole artist, the music we listen to (especially in recent times) is often created by the combined efforts of several people. Does the act of collaboration dilute the purity of this self-expression, or is collaboration a process of addition, with every collaborator adding their own colour to the track's musical spectrum?

Music has many disciplines, and it is assumedly impossible for one person to master them all. This is the obvious motive for why musical artists often collaborate with one another and bands are formed. Do you want to have a bass guitar on your track but have no idea how to play? The solution is obvious: get someone who does. However, this may come with some complications. For example, playing a bass guitar and instructing someone on how you would like them to play a bass guitar are two very distinct processes. As such, disagreements often arise between the principal songwriter and a supporting instrumentalist, both of which believe they have authority over the other — the songwriter because he claims ownership over the song, and the instrumentalist because they feel they are more knowledgeable of their own instrument and its role in a composition. These situations are most often dealt with through compromises that, while not necessarily damaging the quality of the piece in question, definitely assist in muddying its singularity of expression.

There are, however, special cases in which one artist is able to entirely preserve his voice despite the internal pressures of a band — Brian Wilson's tireless work on the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* and Kevin Shields' near-complete creative domination of My Bloody Valentine's *Loveless* are the most infamous examples. The products were two of the most seminal albums in popular music, but also resulted in the near total destruction of the band's interpersonal dynamic, as well as the artist's mental health. But even these extreme examples of solo efforts in music have outside influences found within: Tony Asher wrote most of the lyrics found on *Pet Sounds*, including classics such as "God Only Knows," and Shields sacrificed an entire track, "Touched," to let drummer Colm Ó Cíosóig explore electronic soundscapes. Why is it that these seemingly autocratic musicians would allow such an intrusion on pieces that they have otherwise worked so hard to maintain homogenous? It seems even the most anal of musicians still see the value in collaboration.

THE BEACH BOYS
The Beach Boys Pet Sounds
Sloop John B./Caroline No
Wouldn't It Be Nice/You Still Believe In Me
That's Not Me/Don't Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder)
I'm Waiting For The Day/Let's Go Away For Awhile
God Only Knows/I Know There's An Answer/Here Today
I Just Wasn't Made For These Times/Pet Sounds
Capitol

A trend we are seeing more often nowadays, especially in hip-hop, is for musicians to invite collaborators as guests on at least one track of their album in order to fill a certain stylistic niche or create a certain mood that the guest is known for, or perhaps just for variety's sake — a sort of intentional muddying of the singularity of a track in exchange for aesthetic gains. A solid example would be Battles' *Gloss Drop*. When their vocalist, Tyondai Braxton, departed from the band after their first album, instead of finding a replacement for their follow-up, *Gloss Drop*, they invited guest vocalists on certain tracks they felt required vocals. This was perhaps most famously executed on the album's lead single "Ice Cream."

"We asked Matias Aguayo to guest as a vocalist on ["Ice Cream"]. He kind of really matched that level of sexiness that I think that that song required," says Dave Konopka, multi-instrumentalist for Battles, in an interview for *NME*. "Actually, there was kind of an underlying level of sexiness that the song had and he kind of brought that out a little bit more."

This is obviously an example of a successful, symbiotic collaboration that most musicians working together would strive for: a collaboration that not only fulfills and retains the original artist's vision, but expands upon it and breathes into it new life that the artist could not have done alone.

We must keep in mind that purity of expression is not the main priority of every artist. An artist who is willingly collaborating with another musician is most likely open to accept their collaborator's ideas over their own — otherwise, what would be the point in collaborating? For example, the Flaming Lips have recently been doing entire albums that exist solely for the sake of collaborating with their contemporaries. If every track on these albums sounded exactly like any other Flaming Lips song, what would be the purpose of these projects?

Even the majority of the music that is apparently made by "solo" musicians is rarely ever the effort of only one single person. For example, Joanna Newsom's *Ys* would be a much less enchanting album without Van Dyke Parks' complex orchestral arrangements. Further, Miles Davis is undoubtedly the star player in his compositions, but without the sharp virtuoso playing and support of his band, classic albums like *Kind of Blue* would have obviously suffered. Even Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*, famously recorded by Springsteen alone in his New Jersey bedroom, was picked apart by a team of sound engineers and producers before it was put on shelves. Whether or not this outside influence makes the product of these "solo" efforts any less pure is up for debate, but it is hard to deny that these influences exist.

Whether or not solo music is "purer," or to be even broader, "better" than music created by a collective is a question that is too grand, subjective, and wrought with negative implications on either side to give any definitive answer to. All music, no matter the form, discipline, or chart standings, is a product of intense human effort. What does it matter whether this effort is homogenous?

Young Thug. Photo by SPIN Media.

LIVE BY THE SWORD, DIE BY THE SWORD

the chaotic rise of Young Thug

Stuart Oakes

"The morning *Tha Carter III*'s mind-boggling, first-week sales figures went public, 50 Cent called New York City hip-hop station Hot 97, reporting that the album's success had him "confused." Of course 50 was confused. Rap stars are supposed to carry themselves in a certain manner: Cool, imperturbable, in control."

— Tom Breihan, *Pitchfork*'s 50 Best Albums of 2008

It is unlikely that Young Thug was listening to Hot 97 when 50 called, as the teenager — then sixteen years old — was at that time living in the Jonesboro South Projects in Atlanta, Georgia. Still, 50's rant was only a symptom of a broader dispute and, even without hearing it, the man born Jeffrey Williams would have known that he was living through an ideological battle for rap supremacy. On one side, there was the dangerous composure of gangster rap as championed by southern king T.I., and on the other, something new and utterly foreign: the syrup-addled, try-anything anarchy of New Orleans rapper Lil Wayne. They both held a place in his life — T.I. as the hometown hero, and Wayne as the personal idol — but the two styles could not be more dissimilar.

Picture the individual philosophies in a pool setting. T.I., sunglasses firmly in place, means business. Anything less would be slipping, and slipping means someone else catches you slipping. T.I. is king because he never slips; he is always cooler than you, and he is in command of every situation. Meanwhile, Weezy, high on something freaky, is in the water — flotations are everywhere, people are screaming and throwing things, Wayne is on the surfboard, no, wait, he is off the surfboard, no, wait, he is on the inflatable shark. The entire thing is absolute bedlam. On the deck, T.I. is staring; to him, Wayne, busy violating everything T.I. holds sacred, is some sort of alien. Is he not aware of what a ridiculous figure he cuts? Does he even care about the danger of slipping, the one absolute law of the streets? For a while, the victor is unclear — Wayne sells a ridiculous number of albums and T.I. becomes a star, but both eventually fall prey to the lifestyles they epitomize.

Today, it is more obvious who has proven more influential. Drake

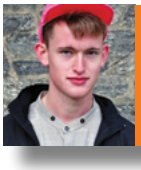
calls Wayne his “big brother.” Future, who raps like a drunk Wayne auto-tuning his way through Arnold Schoenberg›s atonal piece “Pierrot Lunaire,” has several massive hits. When asked what music he likes, Young Thug, the newly ascendant Atlanta rapper, says Wayne. When asked about who inspires him, he says Wayne. When asked if he likes anything else, he references James Blunt. Growing up, T.I.’s music would have seemed entirely familiar to Thug — the King is an alpha male maneuvering through and mastering the same circumstances that Thug woke up to each morning. Most people that Thug knew would have aspired to that sense of control - the ability to dominate their immediate environment - that could compensate for their helplessness. Wayne, on the other hand, was unfamiliar, existing as a glimpse beyond the traditional outcomes T.I. represented. For a kid uninterested in following the social norms of the streets, Wayne’s music was a godsend for Thug.

Jeffrey Williams, born August 9th, 1992 and now known almost exclusively as Young Thug or Thug, spent most of his early life moving between projects in Louisiana and Georgia. His biography, at least initially, sounds all-too-familiar: a childhood spent in the infamous gang territory of Cleveland Avenue, as part of the R.O.C. crew, one brother (and his father) in jail, another gunned down in front of his house, and a lifestyle that left him scarred, sometimes literally. Perhaps due to his position as the second youngest of eleven siblings, he focused on more creative pursuits. Feeling constrained by both poverty and the ways his elders and peers responded to it, he found ways to push against any and all boundaries. Although he did hustle, and blew money on various addictions — he has a story about stealing several thousand dollars from a nail salon and losing it all playing dice the next day — he preferred (and continues) to act out primarily through fashion and musical choices that put him at odds with the more traditional street-centric rap community.

That contrast helped him stand out almost immediately. Though Thug continues to call himself a “street rapper,” it refers to his preferred collaborators and lifestyle more than anything else. His voice — currently one of the most distinctive in the game — is the combination of Future and Wayne, but taken to its logical extreme. Traditional rap wisdom favours lower voices, lyricism, diction and consistent rhyme schemes, but Thug regularly breaches the soprano range, slurs things seemingly at random, repeats words until they have no meaning, and is generally incoherent. Listening to him rap is kind of like sitting below deck on a boat in a storm: you get tossed around like a rag doll without any clue as to what is actually happening. Altogether, the feeling is thrilling, frantic, and frequently overwhelming.

Like Wayne, his music is chaos embodied, more a reflection of his personal history than anything else; however, as always, chaos is a double-edged sword. Initially signed to the equally chaotic Gucci Mane’s 1017 Bricksquad Label — on which he released his big-break mixtape, 1017 Thug, in 2013 — Thug’s managers panicked when Gucci was jailed a couple months later and, worried he would not get his money, began signing with whomever would offer a contract. By early 2014, he was signed to numerous labels simultaneously, a situation that left him in complete limbo. Thug verses were being crudely slapped on anything and everything and labels were releasing tracks from the vault on a weekly basis. Left with relatively little control over what was being released, the disarray almost swallowed the momentum Thug had begun to build on the strength of two hit singles, “Stoner” and “Danny Glover.” It was not until 2014 that Thug, with the help of his new manager, Birdman, had sorted through the red tape and could begin to focus entirely on making music again.

Driven, intentionally or unintentionally, to undermine the conformist attitudes surrounding him, Thug is open to trying anything. Intensely creative and hardworking — he boasts of being able to make a song from anything, even a single word — he is a perfect fit for the unique opportunities offered by Atlanta and its massive, grassroots rapper-producer support system. Naturally unkempt, disorganized and creatively prosperous, these conditions allow him to flourish and put out songs and mixtapes at a punishing rate. While it remains to be seen whether he will break out into a broader market or remain a cult artist, a lot of people — especially those in Atlanta who know him best — are confident he has what it takes. Thug is currently undertaking a ground-breaking stadium tour with Rich Homie Quan and Birdman, a bold move that could make or break his career. However, even if he fades away, it will be in keeping with what made him a star in the first place — those who live by chaos often die by chaos, and Thug would want it no other way.



Stuart Oakes is a second-year Philosophy major who likes Soundcloud and classical music. He wears hats that were originally intended for women and plays the violin. People always seem to think that he is really into rap. He has no other notable qualities, but people are sometimes impressed by the rap thing. One of his roommates is really good with MS Paint. S/O to mom (Cathy) and dad (John).

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

DEDE AKOLO AND JEZA NADIR

STUDENTS

ELIZABETH TSE
LIFE SCIENCE, 2ND YEAR

"SWEATER WEATHER"
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

ABIZER JAFFERJEE
ACTUARIAL SCIENCE, 1ST YEAR

"SO CONFUSED"
RAGHAW

SAHIL KUMAR
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, 1ST YEAR

"MERCY"
KANYE WEST

JOHN NICHOLSON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, 1ST YEAR

"PARADISE CITY"
GUNS AND ROSES

FACULTY

CHRISTIAN CARON, PHD
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

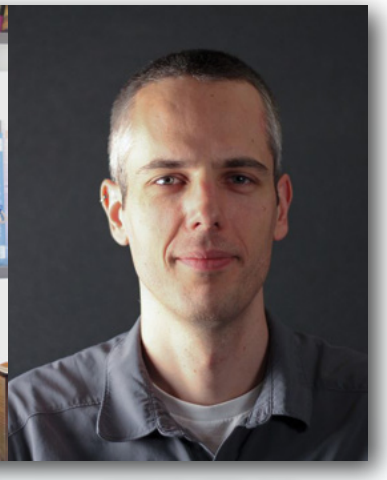
"APPLES"
THE SEASONS

EMANUEL MELO
VICTORIA COLLEGE REGISTRAR

"GRACELESS"
THE NATIONAL

DENISE CRUZ, PHD
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

"ISLANDS IN THE STREAM"
CONSTANTINES & FEIST



MICHAEL REID, PHD
DEPARTMENT OF ASTROPHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY

"THE CIVIL WARS"
PHILIP GLASS AND ROBERT WILSON

Dede Akolo is first-year humanities student looking to major or specialize in Women and Gender Studies and minor in French as a second language. Otherwise, she has nothing in her life figured out. She enjoys writing songs on the guitar, late night walks, and green tea. Born and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia, Dede now spends most of her time complaining about the cold weather.

Jeza Nadir is a first-year Life Sciences student. She loves dogs, frozen yogurt, medieval and fantasy fiction, and, of course, music. Her favourite genres are alternative and indie rock, but, if forced to be honest, she will also admit that she equally enjoys instrumental and soundtrack music for the sole purpose of making her life a little more dramatic than it already is.

OBITUARIES

THE LOSSES, THE DEATHS, AND THE ENDS OF ERAS

JAMES LI AND AYLA SHIBLAQ

THE BANDS WE LOST

There were some surprise break-ups this year, but one of the most tragic of them all was Crystal Castles. A shock to us all, Alice Glass left and, well, that's half the band so that's the end of that. The electronic group mixed danceable beats with excruciating noise and somehow managed to make great songs.

The Swedish electronic music duo The Knife shook their fan base when they announced that they were no more. Who is going to smash the patriarchy now?

We also lost the incredible collaboration of Nicolas Jaar and Dave Harrington: Darkside. Although they technically declared a "hiatus," we don't expect to hear much from them anytime soon. Perhaps now that Jaar has more time, he can take up a new hobby (pick me, pick me!).

Dayton, Ohio's lo-fi legends Guided By Voices are, for a second time, calling it quits. This comes as no surprise, considering the strained relationship between Robert Pollard and the rest of the band. The band decided that after releasing six albums in three years, it was time to end it.

One of the most shocking breakups this year was Death Grips. They ended as they lived: with a middle finger in your face. Anyone who was surprised that the duo would call it quits in the middle of a tour and not play their remaining shows hasn't been properly paying attention to them. It was the perfect end to a career involving a leaked album in defiance of their record label, a dick pic as an album cover, and not showing up to some of their festival gigs (shout out for not playing at Toronto's Time Festival, you jerks). Even more shocking than their stunts was their novel sound, which seamlessly blended hip-hop, punk, industrial, and whatever other genres they felt like.

Apple discontinued the iPod Classic, its most iconic product, this year. The iPod ushered in the age of singles and playlists for better and for worse. It also helped usher in the age of music piracy (who buys 10,000 songs?). As convenient as streaming services are, I'll miss being able to carry my entire music library in my pocket.

DEATHS IN THE TORONTO MUSIC SCENE

The Toronto music scene has seen better years. From announcing the closing of Kool Haus, a venue that housed shows by The Knife, Lady Gaga, and James Blake, to the closure of Yonge Street record store staple Sunrise Records, many music lovers growing up in Toronto will lose a part of their formative years. You will be missed.

The many closures also came with dramatic moves, such as the move of Sonic Boom from their Annex home to Queen and Spadina, or the Toronto Standard revamping its format. Let's also not forget the irreplaceable loss of The Grid in the alt newspaper scene.

PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY DIED

The legendary electronic record label Hyperdub has had a bad year. Their tenth anniversary has been overshadowed by the deaths of their signees DJ Rashad and The Spaceape. When DJ Rashad (real name: Rashad Harden) released his debut album Double Cup last year, he introduced the world to footwork, Chicago's hard-hitting dance music style; however, his potential was cut short when he passed away at the age of 34 from a blood clot on April 26 of this year. The poet and MC known as The Spaceape (real name Stephen Samuel Gordon), who collaborated with Burial, The Bug, and Kode9 also died at the age of 44 from a rare form of cancer on October 2.

DJ Rashad. Media photo.

The Spaceape. Media photo.

James Li is a fourth-year student at Trinity College, specializing in history. He spends way too much time on the Internet digging for albums. By now, he has even stopped listening to them, spending his time monitoring progress bars. He says it feels like all of his birthdays are coming at once, which means, precisely, that he feels like he is going to die.

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